



## MOSQUITOES

**Don't let mosquitoes "BUG" you!  
There are things that YOU CAN DO!**

The most effective way to control mosquitoes is to eliminate or treat the standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs and their larvae live and grow. Once an adult mosquito has emerged from its water-breeding site, air-borne chemical spraying provides only very temporary relief.

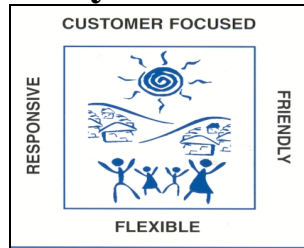
## WHAT TO DO

If mosquitoes are a problem where you live, make sure that you are not providing breeding sites in your own yard. Most mosquitoes are poor fliers. If you are being bitten, they are probably breeding around your home. Mosquitoes prefer to breed in all sorts of still water provided by artificial containers. Running streams and creeks with any water movement or ponds with predators such as fish, frogs, or dragonflies are not good breeding sites for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes need only a few tablespoons of water to breed. Check the following:

- **Roof gutters** - clean out leaves and debris blocking and holding water
- **Discarded cans & containers** - remove, store inside, or turn upside down
- **Old tires** - store tires where they won't collect rainwater
- **Bird baths** - clean, and change the water every 5-7 days
- **Wading pools** - change water regularly and turn over when not in use
- **Drainage ditches** – keep open and free from debris holding water
- **Canoes, boats** - cover with a tight-fitting tarp, or turn upside down
- **Tarps on woodpiles or garden equipment** – remove sagging areas
- **Ornamental ponds** - stock with small fish
- **Puddles and swampy areas** - drain or back fill



## Fairfax County Health Department



### West Nile virus

There are a number of diseases caused by the bite of a mosquito: West Nile virus, Yellow Fever, Eastern and Western Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis, Dengue Fever, Malaria, Filariasis, and others. The West Nile virus is a relatively rare disease in the United States. In a many cases there may be no symptoms or it may cause a mild illness with symptoms similar to the flu. On rare occasions in the United States, the virus causes encephalitis or meningitis that is serious for the elderly or for people with weakened immune systems. In the year 2000, West Nile virus caused the death of only one 82-year-old man in the United States. In contrast, approximately 20,000 people die each year from influenza virus infections. However, just as we can reduce the transmission of influenza with vaccines and public education, so too should we undertake reasonable steps to reduce the threat of West Nile virus. The Health Department continues to monitor the occurrence of West Nile virus and is asks residents to be more conscious of the need to eliminate mosquito-breeding places around their homes.

While most birds do not carry West Nile virus, mosquitoes can become infected with the virus by biting a bird that carries the virus. Crows and blue jays belong to a family of birds that is particularly vulnerable to the West Nile virus. Several bird carcasses in Maryland and Virginia have been confirmed to be carriers of the West Nile virus. The Fairfax County Health Department initiated testing dead crows, blue jays, and raptors (hawks) in 1999 and continues to test these birds that appear to have died within the past 24 hours of natural causes. Persons who find a dead bird that meets these criteria are encouraged to call the Health Department at 703-246-2300.

For more information about things you can do to reduce mosquito breeding around you home or about the West Nile virus, contact the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2300.